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SUBJECT: The Artukovic Case.

Attached is a Memorandum of Conversation on the above subject.

For the Ambassador:

Owen T. Jones  
Counselor of Embassy for Economic Affairs

Attachment.

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Owen T. Jones:ek  
REPORTER

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: The artukovic Case.

Date: April 6, 1961

PLACE: En route Agricultural Installations in Vojvodina.

PARTICIPANTS: Owen T. Jones, Counselor of Embassy for Economic Affairs  
Mr. Franc Primozić, Director of Fifth Political Division  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Mr. Djuro Uzelak, Assistant Secretary of Trade

In the course of a visit to various agricultural installations in Vojvodina on April 6, 1961, I rode in the same car and talked at some length on a variety of subjects with Mr. Franc Primozić, Director of the Fifth Political Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Mr. Djuro Uzelak, Assistant Secretary of Trade. One of the subjects that came up was the Artukovic case on which both men spoke with unusual candor, deep feeling, and animation.

It was Uzelak who opened up the subject. He said that he could not understand why the U.S. Government did not understand the depth of feeling in Yugoslavia towards Artukovic. Uzelak recalled that this man had been the equivalent to a Minister of Interior in the Ustashi Government during the war and asserted that he had been responsible for the killing of over 600,000 Yugoslavs. Uzelak himself had seen his sister killed in the course of a mass murder of 200 of his fellow countrymen by the henchmen of this man. Both Primozić and Uzelak then went on to cite case after case of mutual Yugoslav acquaintances of ours who had lost members of their families due to the activities of Artukovic in Croatia or his German counterpart in Serbia. Both stressed that the feeling here about these activities still ran very deep and memories were still long.

In that context they both said that our handling of the Artukovic was very difficult for the Yugoslav people to understand. The man was associated with the worst war crimes here in Yugoslavia and there was documentary evidence to implicate him with Eichmann in the Jewish atrocities here as well. It was public knowledge that he entered the U.S. under a false name. To have a California Judge refuse to release him, as they put it, because Artukovic's crimes were of a "political nature" was particularly difficult for the Yugoslav people to understand. These were odious crimes and this was a human and not a political problem. As long as we protected this man, it would be a major source of irritant in Yugoslav-U.S. relations and one particularly felt by the Yugoslav people themselves.

to:

Office of Eastern European Affairs, Dept. of State  
Phill, AmEmb/Belgrade